

Message Text

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ORIGIN SY-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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DRAFTED BY SY/CC/TAG:LWATERMAN:SC
APPROVED BY SY/CC - JOHN F. PERDEW
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

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FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJECT: CROATIAN HIJACKERS CONVICTED

1. FOUR CROATIAN NATIONALISTS ON TRIAL IN NEW YORK HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF AIR PIRACY AND CONSPIRACY IN SEPTEMBER 1976 TWA HIJACKING. LEADER OF GROUP, ZVONKO BUSIC AND WIFE JULIENNE ALSO FOUND GUILTY OF AIR PIRACY RESULTING IN DEATH. A FIFTH DEFENDANT HAS PLEADED GUILTY TO AIR PIRACY ON PROMISE OF SENTENCE NO LESS THAN 20 NO MORE THAN 30 YEARS.

2. CONVICTED GROUP SCHEDULED APPEAR IN FEDERAL COURT MAY 23 FOR EITHER PRE-SENTENCING HEARING OR ACTUAL
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SENTENCING. DEFENDANTS STILL LIABLE FOR TRIAL ON STATE MURDER CHARGE, RAISING POSSIBILITY SENTENCING MAY BE DELAYED IF STATE TRIAL HELD.

3. CROATIAN COMMUNITY OF NEW YORK IS DISAPPOINTED WITH CONVICTIONS, HAVING HOPED THE LEADER ALONE WOULD BE FOUND GUILTY ON ALL COUNTS. ANY REVENGE BY CROATIAN ACTIVISTS

WILL PROBABLY BE DELAYED UNTIL ACTUAL SENTENCING.

4. HIJACKING-DEATH CONVICTION FOR TWO BUSICS CARRIES
DEATH PENALTY AS MAXIMUM BUT PROSECUTORS SAY THEY WILL
NOT PRESS FOR EXECUTION. ALTERNATIVE IS MANDATORY LIFE
IMPRISONMENT. CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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